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ABSTRACT

Intended for students taking the Grade 12 Examination in English 30 in Alberta, Canada, this reading test (to be administered along with the questions booklet) contains 10 short reading selections taken from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, including the following: an excerpt from "Where Did You Go?" "Out." (Robert Paul Smith); "Lines on Young Lady's Photograph Album" (Philip Larkin); an excerpt from "Nicholas Nickleby" (Charles Dickens); "Snakeroot" (Gary Geddes); an excerpt from "Henry IV: Part 2" (William Shakespeare); an excerpt from "Bonjour, La, Bonjour: No.28 Trio" (Michel Tremblay); an excerpt from "In the Land of Dreamy Dreams" (Ellen Gilchrist); "War Preparers Anonymous" (Kurt Vonnegut); "How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird" (Jaques Prevert); and "Plastic World" (Ellen Goodman). (EL)

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GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION
ENGLISH 30

PART B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

READINGS BOOKLET

Alberta Education

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Part B of the English 30 Diploma Examination has 80 questions in the Questions Booklet and 10 reading selections in the Readings Booklet.

CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN ENGLISH 30 QUESTIONS BOOKLET AND AN ENGLISH 30 READINGS BOOKLET.

YOU WILL HAVE 2 HOURS TO COMPLETE THIS EXAMINATION.

You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

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JANUARY 1985

CS209377

1. Read the excerpt from "Where Did You Go?" "Out." and answer questions 1 to 10 from your Questions Booklet.

from "WHERE DID YOU GO?" "OUT."

We used to play a game called stoop ball. It is my considered reflection that for three months out of every year, for years on end, all we did was play stoop ball. It had to be played with a golf ball, I don't know why. After a certain amount of time, the golf ball — which we wouldn't have had at all unless the cover was cut almost to ribbons — would have enough cuts in it so you could pull off the white covering. Then for another three days, what you did was unwind the rubber band. I am not sure what you did with the rubber string you unwound, except to wrap it around various parts of your body until the circulation stopped. Mostly, once again, it was just what kids did. Unwound the rubber. In the centre was a little white ball the size of an immie.[1] Inside it, we knew, was something which was so dangerous it was inconceivable. There were two schools of thought. One, that it was an explosive so powerful that, that, that — well jeez, it was an *explosive*! The other school of thought held that it was a poison that killed, not only on contact anybody who was foolhardy enough to open it, but it would strike dead, on the whole block, every person, cat, collie dog. It could also wither trees and probably melt the pavement.

We cut one open once, and a thick white liquid dribbled out. I was the wise guy. Somebody said it was poison, so I had to say it wasn't. I touched it. Catch me doing that today! That stuff there, that stuff — why jeez, it's an explosive!

I suppose this is all just an indication of my advanced years, but I don't know things now like I used to know then. What we knew as kids, what we learned from other kids, was not tentatively true, or extremely probable, or proven by science or polls or surveys. It was so. I suppose this has to do with ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. We were savages, we were in that stage of the world's history when the earth stood still and everything else moved. I wrote on the flyleaf of my school book, and apparently every other kid in the world did, including James Joyce and Abe Lincoln and I am sure Tito and Fats Waller and Michaelangelo, in descending order my name, my street, my town, my county, my state, my country, my continent, my hemisphere, my planet, my solar system. And let nobody dissemble: it started out with me, the universe was the outer circle of a number of concentric rings, and the centre point was me, me, me, sixty-two pounds wringing wet with heavy shoes on. I have the notion, and perhaps I am wrong, that kids don't feel that way any more. Damn Captain Video! And also, I am afraid, damn "The Real True Honest-to-God Book of Elementary Astrophysics in Words of One Syllable for Pre-School Use."

Once again, it's because we grownups are always around pumping our kids full of what we laughingly call facts. They don't want science. They want magic. They don't want hypotheses, they want immutable truth. They want to be, they should be, in a clearing in the jungle painting themselves blue, dancing around the fire and making it rain by patting snakes and shaking rattles. It is so strange: nobody, so far as I know, sat around worrying about the insides of our heads, and we made ourselves safe. Time enough to find out, as we are finding out now, that nothing is so. Not even close to so.

[1]immie — a marble

Continued

But then: facts, facts, facts. If you cut yourself in the web of skin between your thumb and forefinger, you die. That's it. No ifs or buts. Cut. Die. Let's get on to other things. If you eat sugar lumps, you get worms. If you cut a worm in half, he don't feel a thing and you get two worms. Grasshoppers spit tobacco. Step on a crack, break your mother's back. Walk past a house with a quarantine sign, and don't hold your breath, and you get sick and die . . . Cigarettes stunt your growth. Some people are double-jointed, and by that we didn't mean any jazz like very loose tendons or whatever the facts are. This guy had two joints where we had one. A Dodge (if your family happened to own a Dodge) was the best car in the whole world.

We cut our fingers in that web and didn't die, but our convictions didn't change. We ate sugar lumps, and I don't recall getting worms, but the fact was still there. We'd pass by the next day and both halves of the worm would be dead, our mother's back never broke, my sister had scarlet fever right in my own house and I must have breathed once or twice in all that time . . . and we really knew that what came out of the grasshopper was not tobacco juice. But facts were one thing, and beliefs were another.

Robert Paul Smith

II. Read "Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album" and answer questions 11 to 18 from your Questions Booklet.

LINES ON A YOUNG LADY'S PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

At last you yielded up the album, which,
Once open, sent me distracted. All your ages
Matte and glossy on the thick black pages!
Too much confectionery, too rich:
I choke on such nutritious images.

My swivel eye hungers from pose to pose —
In pigtails, clutching a reluctant cat;
Or furred yourself, a sweet girl-graduate;
Or lifting a heavy-headed rose
Beneath a trellis, or in a trilby hat[1]

(Faintly disturbing, that, in several ways) —
From every side you strike at my control,
Not least through these disquieting chaps who loll
At ease about your earlier days:
Not quite your class, I'd say, dear, on the whole.

But o, photography! as no art is,
Faithful and disappointing! that records
Dull days as dull, and hold-it smiles as frauds,
And will not censor blemishes
Like washing-lines, and Hall's Distemper boards,[2]

But shows the cat as disinclined, and shades
A chin as doubled when it is, what grace
Your candor thus confers upon her face!
How overwhelmingly persuades
That this is a real girl in a real place,

In every sense empirically true!
Or is it just the *past*? Those flowers, that gate,
These misty parks and motors, lacerate
Simply by being over; you
Contract my heart by looking out of date.

Philip Larkin

[1]trilby hat — a soft felt hat with an indented crown
[2]Hall's Distemper boards — large advertising boards showing medicinal products

III. Read the excerpt from *Nicholas Nickleby* and answer questions 19 to 25 from your Questions Booklet.

from NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

Mr. Squeers' appearance was not prepossessing. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favor of two. The eye he had was unquestionably useful, but decidedly not ornamental, being of a greenish grey, and in shape resembling the fanlight of a street door. The blank side of his face was much wrinkled and puckered up, which gave him a very sinister appearance, especially when he smiled, at which times his expression bordered closely on the villainous. His hair was very flat and shiny, save at the ends, where it was brushed stiffly up from a low protruding forehead, which assorted well with his harsh voice and coarse manner. He was about two or three and fifty, and a trifle below the middle size; he wore a white neckerchief with long ends, and a suit of scholastic black, but his coat sleeves being a great deal too long, and his trousers a great deal too short, he appeared ill at ease in his clothes, and as if he were in a perpetual state of astonishment at finding himself so respectable.

Mr. Squeers was standing by one of the coffee-room fireplaces, fitted with one such table as is usually seen in coffee-rooms, and two of extraordinary shapes and dimensions made to suit the angles of the partition. In a corner of the seat was a very small trunk, tied round with a scanty piece of cord; and on the trunk was perched — his lace-up half-boots and corduroy trousers dangling in the air — a diminutive boy, with his shoulders drawn up to his ears, and his hands planted on his knees, who glanced timidly at the schoolmaster from time to time with evident dread and apprehension.

"Half-past three," muttered Mr. Squeers, turning from the window, and looking sulkily at the coffee-room clock. "There will be nobody here to-day."

Much vexed by this reflection, Mr. Squeers looked at the little boy to see whether he was doing anything he could beat him for: as he happened not to be doing anything at all, he merely boxed his ears, and told him not to do it again.

"At Midsummer," muttered Mr. Squeers, resuming his complaint, "I took down ten boys; ten twentys — two hundred pound. I go back at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, and have got only three — three oughts[1] an ought — three twos six — sixty pound. What's come of all the boys? what's parents got in their heads? what does it all mean?"

Here the little boy on the top of the trunk gave a violent sneeze.

"Halloa, Sir!" growled the schoolmaster, turning round. "What's that, Sir?"

"Nothing, please Sir," replied the little boy.

"Nothing, Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Squeers.

"Please Sir, I sneezed," rejoined the boy, trembling till the little trunk shook under him.

"Oh! sneezed, did you?" retorted Mr. Squeers. "Then what did you say 'nothing' for, Sir?"

[1]oughts — zeros

In default of a better answer to this question, the little boy screwed a couple of knuckles into each of his eyes and began to cry, wherefore Mr. Squeers knocked him off the trunk with a blow on one side of his face, and knocked him on again with a blow on the other.

"Wait till I get you down into Yorkshire, my young gentleman," said Mr. Squeers, "and then I'll give you the rest. Will you hold that noise, Sir?"

"Ye—ye—yes," sobbed the little boy, rubbing his face very hard with the Beggar's Petition in printed calico.[2]

"Then do so at once, Sir," said Squeers. "Do you hear?"

As this admonition was accompanied with a threatening gesture, and uttered with a savage aspect, the little boy rubbed his face harder, as if to keep the tears back; and, beyond alternately sniffing and choking, gave no further vent to his emotions.

"Mr. Squeers," said the waiter, looking in at this juncture, "here's a gentleman asking for you at the bar."

"Show the gentleman in, Richard," replied Mr. Squeers, in a soft voice. "Put your handkerchief in your pocket, you little scoundrel, or I'll murder you when the gentleman goes."

The schoolmaster had scarcely uttered these words in a fierce whisper, when the stranger entered. Affecting not to see him, Mr. Squeers feigned to be intent upon mending a pen, and offering benevolent advice to his youthful pupil.

"My dear child," said Mr. Squeers, "all people have their trials. This early trial of yours that is fit to make your little heart burst, and your very eyes come out of your head with crying, what is it? Nothing; less than nothing. You are leaving your friends, but you will have a father in me, my dear, and a mother in Mrs. Squeers. At the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, where youth are boarded, clothed, booked, washed, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries —"

"It *is* the gentleman," observed the stranger, stopping the schoolmaster in the rehearsal of his advertisement. "Mr. Squeers, I believe, Sir?"

"The same, Sir," said Mr. Squeers, with an assumption of extreme surprise.

"The gentleman," said the stranger, "that advertised in the *Times* newspaper?"

—"*Morning Post*, *Chronicle*, *Herald*, and *Advertiser*, regarding the Academy called Dotheboys Hall at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire," added Mr. Squeers. "You come on business, Sir. I see by my young friends. How do you do, my little gentleman? and how do *you* do, Sir?" With this salutation Mr. Squeers patted the heads of two hollow-eyed, small-boned little boys, whom the applicant had brought with him, and waited for further communications.

"I am in the oil and color way. My name is Snawley, Sir," said the stranger.

Charles Dickens

[2]the Beggar's Petition in printed calico — a prayer embroidered on a handkerchief

IV. Read "Snakeroot" and answer questions 26 to 33 from your Questions Booklet.

SNAKEROOT

i
Along the dirt roads of summer,
black prairie mud oozing my toes,

sun-baked ridges of clay
crumbling, the childhood me

scrambles for Senega root,[1]
in ditches, edges of pastures,

along the road allowance,
staggers home reeling from sun,

no more than an ounce of rare
weed in my pocket, craggy

pungent rattlesnake root, a
smell the nose remembers.

ii
The road to hell is paved. Along
its length snakes proliferate, wind

themselves about our lives, poison
the air we breathe. All night

the rattle of traffic, faces stare
from bloodshot windows. Somewhere

a root so potent it would cure
the sting of concrete and macadam,[2]

hurt of steel, a burning in the lungs,
some magic elixir of leaves and sweet

grasses, essence of wildflowers, tiger
lily, gum of fresh, chewed wheat, free

to all takers, that will end the long
bitterness, mend the bruised heel.

Gary Geddes

[1]Senega root (snakeroot) — root used to treat snakebite
[2]macadam — pavement

V. Read the excerpt from *Henry IV: Part 2* and answer questions 34 to 44 from your Questions Booklet.

from HENRY IV: PART 2

Act IV, Scene v

Characters

King Henry IV
Clarence – son of the King
Gloucester – son of the King
Prince Henry – son of the King (next in line to the throne)
Warwick – an attendant

The King (Henry IV) is lying on a bed, ill. His crown has been set upon the pillow beside him.

Enter **PRINCE HENRY**.
PRINCE: Who saw the Duke of Clarence?
CLARENCE: I am here, brother, full of heaviness.
PRINCE: How now! rain within doors, and none abroad!
How doth the King?
GLOUCESTER: Exceeding ill.
PRINCE: Heard he the good news yet? Tell it him.
GLOUCESTER: He altered much upon the hearing it.
PRINCE: If he be sick with joy, he'll recover without physic.
WARWICK: Not so much noise, my lords. Sweet Prince, speak low;
The King, your father, is dispos'd to sleep.
CLARENCE: Let us withdraw into the other room.
WARWICK: Will't please your Grace to go along with us?
PRINCE: No; I will sit and watch here by the King.
(*Exeunt all but the Prince.*)

Continued

(Prince's speech continued)

Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,
Being so troublesome a bedfellow?
O polish'd perturbation! golden care!
That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide
To many a watchful night! Sleep with it now!
Yet not so sound and half so deeply sweet
As he whose brow with homely biggen[1] bound
Snores out the watch of night. O majesty!
When thou dost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit
Like a rich armor worn in heat of day,
That scald'st with safety. By his gates of breath
There lies a downy feather which stirs not.
Did he suspire,[2] that light and weightless down
Perforce must move. My gracious lord! my father!
This sleep is sound indeed; this is a sleep
That from this golden rigol[3] hath divorc'd
So many English kings. Thy due from me
Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,
Which nature, love, and filial tenderness
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously.
My due from thee is this imperial crown,
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. (*Puts on the crown.*) Lo, where it sits,
Which God shall guard; and put the world's whole strength
Into one giant arm, it shall not force
This lineal honor from me. This from thee
Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me. (*Exit.*)

KING: Warwick! Gloucester! Clarence!

(*Re-enter WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE and the rest.*)

CLARENCE: Doth the King call?

WARWICK: What would your Majesty? How fares your Grace?

KING: Why did you leave me here alone, my lords?

CLARENCE: We left the Prince my brother here, my liege,
Who undertook to sit and watch by you.

KING: The Prince of Wales! Where is he? Let me see him.
He is not here.

WARWICK: This door is open; he is gone this way.

GLOUCESTER: He came not through the chamber where we stay'd.

KING: Where is the crown? Who took it from my pillow?

WARWICK: When we withdrew, my liege, we left it here.

KING: The Prince hath ta'en it hence. Go, seek him out.
Is he so hasty that he doth suppose
My sleep my death?
Find him, my Lord of Warwick; chide him hither.
(*Exit WARWICK.*)

Continued

[1]biggen — nightcap
[2]suspire — breathe
[3]rigol — circle

(King's speech continued)

This part of his conjoins with my disease,
And helps to end me. See, sons, what things you are!
How quickly nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object!
For this the foolish over-careful fathers
Have broke their sleep with thoughts, their brains with care,
Their bones with industry;
For this they have engrossed and pil'd up
The cank'red heaps of strange-achieved gold;
For this they have been thoughtful to invest
Their sons with arts and martial exercises;
When, like the bee, tolling from every flower
The virtuous sweets,
Our thighs pack'd with wax, our mouths with honey,
We bring it to the hive, and, like the bees,
Are murd'red for our pains. This bitter taste
Yields his engrossments to the ending father.
(Re-enter WARWICK.)
Now, where is he that will not stay so long
Till his friend sickness hath determin'd me?

WARWICK: My lord, I found the Prince in the next room,
Washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks,
With such a deep demeanor in great sorrow
That Tyranny, which never quaff'd but blood,
Would, by beholding him, have wash'd his knife
With gentle eye-drops. He is coming hither.

KING: But wherefore did he take away the crown?

William Shakespeare

VI. Read No. 28 Trio, a scene from the play *Bonjour, là, Bonjour*, and answer questions 45 to 53 from your Questions Booklet.

from BONJOUR, LÀ, BONJOUR: NO. 28 TRIO

On the stage are: Serge, about 25 years old, just rdddddeturned from Europe; his two aunts, Albertine (sometimes called Bartine) and Charlotte; and his father, who does not speak. The stage is darkened and a single spotlight is focused on each character.

ALBERTINE: It gets to the point you don't know what to do anymore. . .
SERGE (*very loudly*): Papa. . .
ALBERTINE: Roast beef one day. . .
SERGE: Can you hear me, Papa?
ALBERTINE: Chicken or spaghetti the next. . .
SERGE: I thought about you a lot while I was away. . .
ALBERTINE: Then a roast of veal or maybe a stew. . .
SERGE: Papa, not once in our lives have we had a serious conversation.
ALBERTINE: And then, you're stuck. You don't know what to do anymore.
SERGE: I hardly know you. And I'm sure you hardly know me.
ALBERTINE: So you go back and start over. . .
SERGE: When I was a kid, I never saw you 'cause you worked nights, and then later. . .
CHARLOTTE: Your aunt is sick of eating the same old thing. . .
SERGE: Ever since Mama died, you've been escaping to the tavern. . .
CHARLOTTE: When it comes to cooking, Aunt Bartine's got no imagination. . .
SERGE: I don't even know who you are! You never told us!
CHARLOTTE: I know everything costs a lot. . .
SERGE: Even if your hearing was bad, there were times when I needed to talk to you . . . We were the only two men in the house.
ALBERTINE: But Good Lord, everything costs a fortune. . .
SERGE: I remember when I was in school. Sometimes I'd write you letters when I needed your advice, but then I'd throw them away 'cause I was too embarrassed to give them to you. . .
ALBERTINE: We have a hard time making ends meet, so I can't always fix what I'd like. . .
SERGE: How come everyone was always so embarrassed in this house?
CHARLOTTE: Even if we spent a fortune on food, she'd waste it. . .
SERGE: I mean, we could have learned to use signs or something.
ALBERTINE: Of course, your aunt's had an awful time with her arthritis. . .
SERGE: Once again, Papa, I have to shout things we'd normally whisper. . .and it's difficult.
ALBERTINE: Your poor aunt can't even make a pie crust anymore. . .
SERGE: I thought about you a lot while I was gone and I realized something terrible. . .
ALBERTINE: Say what you will, those ready-made pie crusts aren't nearly as good. . .

SERGE: You've never heard us say that we love you!
ALBERTINE: They're like candy. . .
SERGE: I know it bothers you . . . Don't turn away. . .
ALBERTINE: Nothing but sugar and air.
SERGE: Look at me. . .
CHARLOTTE: Your aunt tried to bake you a cake to celebrate your coming home. . .
SERGE: I know, you think men don't say these things to each other. . .
CHARLOTTE: But I wish you could have seen it . . . We had to throw it away. . .
SERGE: I love you, Papa!
CHARLOTTE: Hard as a rock!
SERGE: I may be twenty years too late, I'm no longer a kid, but I still need to say it. I love you!
ALBERTINE: And your father, he hardly eats a thing these days.
SERGE: Even if you don't hear, that's no reason not to tell you these things.
ALBERTINE: He pokes around in his plate a little, but he leaves everything. . .
SERGE: You can at least read my lips. Papa, I love you!
CHARLOTTE: She gives him the best parts and he doesn't even touch them!
SERGE: And if nobody's told you that for forty years 'cause it's the sort of thing you don't shout, well, too bad, I'll shout it. Papa, I love you!
CHARLOTTE: All I get are the scraps. . .
SERGE: Because I know you need that, you too.
ALBERTINE: It's not even worth trying anymore.
SERGE: Don't cry.
ALBERTINE: It's not worth it. . .
SERGE: Papa, please don't cry.
ALBERTINE: It's not worth the effort. . .
SERGE: Don't cry. . .
ALBERTINE: It's too late to make the effort. It's too late.

Michel Tremblay

VII. Read the excerpt from *In the Land of Dreamy Dreams* and answer questions 54 to 60 from your Questions Booklet.

from IN THE LAND OF DREAMY DREAMS

Finding the dress was another matter. Early the next morning Miss Onnie Maud and my grandmother and Lauralee and I set out for Greenville.

As we passed the pasture I hung out the back window making faces at the athletes. This time they only pretended to ignore me. They couldn't ignore the wedding. It was going to be in the parlor instead of the church so they wouldn't even get to be altar boys. They wouldn't get to light a candle.

"I don't know why you care what's going on in that pasture," my grandmother said. "Even if they let you play with them all it would do is make you a lot of ugly muscles."

"Then you'd have big old ugly arms like Weegie Toler," Miss Onnie Maud said. "Lauralee, you remember Weegie Toler, that was a swimmer. Her arms got so big no one would take her to a dance, much less marry her."

"Well, I don't want to get married anyway," I said. "I'm never getting married. I'm going to New York City and be a lawyer."

"Where does she get those ideas?" Miss Onnie Maud said.

"When you get older you'll want to get married," Lauralee said. "Look at how much fun you're having being in my wedding."

"Well, I'm never getting married," I said. "And I'm never having any children. I'm going to New York and be a lawyer and save people from the electric chair."

"It's the movies," Miss Onnie Maud said. "They let her watch anything she likes in Indiana."

We walked into Nell's and Blum's Department Store and took up the largest dressing room. My grandmother and Miss Onnie Maud were seated on brocade chairs and every saleslady in the store came crowding around trying to get in on the wedding. I refused to even consider the dresses they brought from the "girls" department.

"I told her she could wear whatever she wanted," Lauralee said, "and I'm keeping my promise."

"Well, she's not wearing green satin or I'm not coming," my grandmother said, indicating the dress I had found on a rack and was clutching against me.

"At least let her try it on," Lauralee said. "Let her see for herself." She zipped me into the green satin. It came down to my ankles and fit around my midsection like a girdle, making my waist seem smaller than my stomach. I admired myself in the mirror. It was almost perfect. I looked exactly like a nightclub singer.

"This one's fine," I said. "This is the one I want."

"It looks marvellous, Rhoda," Lauralee said, "but it's the wrong color for the wedding. Remember I'm wearing blue."

"I believe the child's color-blind," Miss Onnie Maud said. "It runs in her father's family."

"I am not color-blind," I said, reaching behind me and unzipping the dress. "I have twenty-twenty vision."

"Let her try on some more," Lauralee said. "Let her try on everything in the store."

I proceeded to do just that, with the salesladies getting grumpier and grumpier. I tried on a gold gabardine dress with a rhinestone-studded cummerbund. I tried on a pink ballerina-length formal and a lavender voile tea dress and several silk suits. Somehow nothing looked right.

"Maybe we'll have to make her something," my grandmother said.

"But there's no time," Miss Onnie Maud said. "Besides first we'd have to find out what she wants. Rhoda, please tell us what you're looking for."

Their faces all turned to mine, waiting for an answer. But I didn't know the answer.

The dress I wanted was a secret. The dress I wanted was dark and tall and thin as a reed. There was a word for what I wanted, a word I had seen in magazines. But what was that word? I could not remember.

"I want something dark," I said at last. "Something dark and silky."

"Wait right there," the saleslady said. "Wait just a minute." Then, from out of a prewar storage closet she brought a black-watch plaid recital dress with spaghetti straps and a white piqué jacket. It was made of taffeta and rustled when I touched it. There was a label sewn into the collar of the jacket. *Little Miss Sophisticate*, it said. *Sophisticate*, that was the word I was seeking.

I put on the dress and stood triumphant in a sea of ladies and dresses and hangers.

"This is the dress," I said. "This is the dress I'm wearing."

"It's perfect," Lauralee said. "Start hemming it up. She'll be the prettiest maid of honor in the whole world."

All the way home I held the box on my lap thinking about how I would look in the dress. Wait till they see me like this, I was thinking. Wait till they see what I really look like.

Ellen Gilchrist

VIII. Read "War Preparers Anonymous" and answer questions 61 to 67 from your Questions Booklet.

WAR PREPARERS ANONYMOUS

From a speech given by Kurt Vonnegut at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA[1] in New York City and printed in The Nation, *January 7, 1984.*

What has been America's most nurturing contribution to the culture of this planet so far? Many would say jazz. I, who love jazz, will say this instead: Alcoholics Anonymous.

I am not an alcoholic. If I were, I would go before the nearest AA meeting and say, "My name is Kurt Vonnegut. I am an alcoholic." God willing, that might be my first step down the long, hard road back to sobriety.

The AA scheme, which requires a confession like that, is the first to have any measurable success in dealing with the tendency of some human beings, perhaps 10 per cent of any population, to become addicted to substances that give them brief spasms of pleasure but in the long term transmute their lives and the lives of those around them into ultimate ghastliness.

The AA scheme, which, again, can work only if the addicts regularly admit that this or that chemical is poisonous to them, is now proving its effectiveness with compulsive gamblers, who are not dependent on chemicals from a distillery or a pharmaceutical laboratory. This is no paradox. Gamblers, in effect, manufacture their own dangerous substances. God help them, they produce chemicals that elate them whenever they place a bet on simply anything.

If I were a compulsive gambler, which I am not, I would be well advised to stand up before the nearest meeting of Gamblers Anonymous and declare, "My name is Kurt Vonnegut. I am a compulsive gambler."

Whether I was standing before a meeting of Gamblers Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous, I would be encouraged to testify as to how the chemicals I had generated within myself or swallowed had alienated my friends and relatives, cost me jobs and houses, and deprived me of my last shred of self-respect.

I now wish to call attention to another form of addiction, which has not been previously identified. It is more like gambling than drinking, since the people afflicted are ravenous for situations that will cause their bodies to release exciting chemicals into their bloodstreams. I am persuaded that there are among us people who are tragically hooked on preparations for war.

Tell people with that disease that war is coming and we have to get ready for it, and for a few minutes there they will be as happy as a drunk with his martini breakfast or a compulsive gambler with his paycheque bet on the Super Bowl.

[1]YM-YWHA — Young Men's-Young Women's Hebrew Association

Let us recognize how sick such people are. From now on, when a national leader, or even just a neighbor, starts talking about some new weapons system that is going to cost us a mere $29 billion, we should speak up. We should say something on the order of, "Honest to God, I couldn't be sorrier for you if I'd seen you wash down a fistful of black beauties[2] with a pint of Southern Comfort."

I mean it. I am not joking. Compulsive preparers for World War III, in this country or any other, are as tragically and as repulsively addicted as any executive passed out with his head in a toilet in the Port Authority bus terminal.

For an alcoholic to experience a little joy, he needs maybe three ounces of grain alcohol. Alcoholics, when they are close to hitting bottom, customarily can't hold much alcohol.

If we know a compulsive gambler who is dead broke, we can probably make him happy with a dollar to bet on who can spit farther than someone else.

For us to give a compulsive war-preparer a fleeting moment of happiness, we may have to buy him three Trident submarines and a hundred intercontinental ballistic missiles mounted on choo-choo trains.

If Western Civilization were a person —

If Western Civilization, which blankets the world now, as far as I can tell, were a person —

If Western Civilization, which surely now includes the Soviet Union and China and India and Pakistan and on and on, were a person —

If Western Civilization were a person, we would be directing it to the nearest meeting of War Preparers Anonymous. We would be telling it to stand up before the meeting and say, "My name is Western Civilization. I am a compulsive war-preparer. I have lost everything I ever cared about. I should have come here long ago. I first hit bottom in World War I."

Western Civilization cannot be represented by a single person, of course, but a single explanation for the catastrophic course it has followed during this bloody century is possible. We the people, because of our ignorance of the disease, have again and again entrusted power to people we did not know were sickies.

And let us not mock them now, any more than we would mock someone with syphilis or smallpox or leprosy or yaws or typhoid fever or any of the other diseases to which the flesh is heir. All we have to do is separate them from the levers of power, I think.

And then what?

Western Civilization's long, hard trip back to sobriety might begin.

Kurt Vonnegut

[2]black beauties — street drugs

IX. Read "How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird" and answer questions 68 to 74 from your Questions Booklet.

HOW TO PAINT THE PORTRAIT OF A BIRD

First paint a cage
with an open door
then paint
something pretty
something simple
something fine
something useful
for the bird
next place the canvas against a tree
in a garden
in a wood
or in a forest
hide behind the tree
without speaking
without moving. . .
Sometimes the bird comes quickly
but it can also take many years
before making up its mind
Don't be discouraged
wait
wait if necessary for years
the quickness or the slowness of the coming
of the bird having no relation
to the success of the picture
When the bird comes
if it comes
observe the deepest silence
wait for the bird to enter the cage
and when it has entered
gently close the door with the paint-brush
then
one by one paint out all the bars
taking care not to touch one feather of the bird

Continued

Next make a portrait of the tree
choosing the finest of its branches
for the bird
paint also the green leaves and the freshness of the wind
dust in the sun
and the sound of the insects in the summer grass
and wait for the bird to decide to sing
If the bird does not sing
it is a bad sign
a sign that the picture is bad
but if it sings it is a good sign
a sign that you are ready to sign
so then you pluck very gently
one of the quills of the bird
and you write your name in a corner of the picture.

Jacques Prévert

X. Read "Plastic World" and answer questions 75 to 80 from your Questions Booklet.

PLASTIC WORLD

The moment of truth came at 3 p.m. on our second day in The Magic Kingdom of Disney World. There, in the middle of Fantasyland, a small brown bird got up and flew away.

Now I know that small brown birds do this sort of thing all the time. But not, I assure you, in Disney World.

In Disney World, they may sing, they may bob their heads, kick their legs, move their beaks, blink their eyes and flap their wings. But they do not fly away. And so, I stood there for several dumbfounded seconds, looking for his wire.

We'd been in Disney World long enough.

For two days we'd been awed and delighted by a world in which anything was mechanically possible, but a world in which the only Real Thing was the Coca-Cola.

The hotel we were in was so committed to the Dutch motif that anything that wasn't nailed down was molded in the shape of a wooden shoe. There, we swam in a pool in the shape of a windmill. From this absolute tulip of a spot we shuttled back and forth to The Magic Kingdom. And there, too, everything was in the shape of something else.

Each bush was a topiary version of a dragon, or an elephant balancing on its trunk. Trees were carved into crocodiles. Wax was molded into Presidents. An entire zoology department was created out of the endangered species known as plastic.

Disney World is nothing if not homage to the Mickey Mouse that lurks in each of us, an advertisement written to the Genuine Imitation. It is a tribute to the lifelike. As opposed to, say, the live.

Am I grousing? No, I loved it. I loved the rides, loved the fantasy and the monorails. It is the cleanest, most trains-run-on-time amusement park in the world. Like the thirteen million other Americans who'll visit this year, I was awed by the creations of Frontier Land and River Country and the sheer cleverness of the people who created all the characters of the cartoon world from Peter Pan to Cinderella.

Still, you don't have to be a Save-the-Snail-Darter fan to see something weird about the idea of taking acres of natural land and carving out artificial streams and waterfalls — each with its own plastic inhabitants.

And you don't have to be a Restoration Bug to notice that millions of tourists every year gasp with awe at the reproduction of Main Street — just like the original one being torn down at home.

Over $700 million was invested in this place, and there are enough Mickey Mouse T-shirts sold there every year, I'm sure, to double the bank account of the Sierra Club. The $50 million that went into building the Space Mountain could save a whole lot of other mountains. If only it were profitable.

Well, I refuse to fume about the inconsistencies and contradictions of society. It's too simplistic. You can't take the money from Tomorrow Land and use it to save whales.

But standing there, watching the flight of the brown bird, I thought of that 1960s song, "Pave paradise, put up a parking lot." The writer was way off the mark. If we were to pave paradise, we'd put up a perfect imitation. Plastic apple and all.

We are much more fascinated with the man-made than with the natural. We are more impressed with what we have made than with what is just there. We are constantly making improvements on nature and applauding our cleverness. We prefer our animals to be anthropomorphic and our mice to be Mickeys.

We also seem to get much more excited about making something "new" — even if it is a New Historical Village — than saving something old, like a house or a train station or a drugstore on the corner.

It's a form of human narcissism, I suppose. We find teeny transistors more marvellous than seeds, Disney lands more extraordinary than natural ones. But it is the sort of pride that can be shaken by a small brown bird in a big plastic world.

Ellen Goodman

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